

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application as amended is requested. Claims 2, 7, 8 and 11 have been amended, claims 10 and 21 have been canceled, claims 1, 2, 7-9, 11, 19, 20 and 22 remain in this application. The specification has been amended as per the Examiner's suggestion.

Objection to Claims 2, 7-11

Claims 2 and 7-11 have been objected to due to informalities. Applicant has amended claims 2, 7, 8 and 11 consistent with the Examiner's suggestions and therefore the objections to these claims should be withdrawn. With respect to claim 9, it was stated that this claim was objected to because it is depended upon an objected base claim (claim 8), however, claim 8 has been amended to remove the informality therewith, such that claim 9 is not now dependent upon an objected base claim. Therefore, claim 9 is not presented in independent form and the objection to claim 9 should be withdrawn.

Claim 10 has been canceled rendering the objection to this claim moot.

In light of the above, the objections to the claims have been overcome and should be withdrawn.

Rejection of claim 21 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph

Claim 21 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph as allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement. Without commenting as to the propriety of the rejection, and without an admission that the rejection is proper, Applicant has canceled claim 21 rendering this rejection moot. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Rejection of claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

Claim 10 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as allegedly being indefinite. Without commenting as to the propriety of the rejection, and without an admission that the rejection is proper, Applicant has canceled claim 10 rendering this rejection moot. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Rejection of claims 19-22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 19-22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e). Applicant submits that Beeley et al. (US 6187540) is not properly prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102(e).

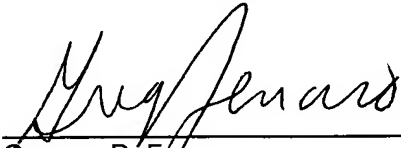
The law of 35 U.S.C. §102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA applies to the Beeley et al. reference making the effective date of this reference June 30, 1999, not June 30, 1997 as stated by the Examiner. The effective date of a reference under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) prior to the AIPA amendments is the date the patent was filed in the United States. This date for the Beeley et al. patent is June 30, 1999.

Accordingly, Claims 19, 20 and 22 (21 having been canceled in this amendment) are not properly rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over the Beeley et al. reference and this rejection should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits the Application is now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests early notice to that effect.

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Respectfully submitted,



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